

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CU-02 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 CCO-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01

/074 W

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P R 011514Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9291

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

ZNE/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA (POUCH)

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, NU

SUBJECT: STUDENT OCCUPATION OF CHURCHES IN LEON

REF: MANAGUA 0602

1. ON FEBRUARY 21 ABOUT 300-350 STUDENTS FROM THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA (UNAN) IN LEON OCCUPIED ALL OF THE PRINCIPAL CHURCHES IN LEON INCLUDING THE CATHEDRAL. THE STUDENTS CLAIMED THAT TOMAS BORGE (LEADER OF THE FSLN URBAN COMMAND) HAS BEEN HELD BY THE GUARDIA NACIONAL IN MANAGUA SINCE EARLY FEBRUARY, FOLLOWING AN ARMED CLASH WITH THE GUARDIA IN MANAGUA. THEY DEMANDED THAT BORGE BE BROUGHT BEFORE A CIVIL, NOT A MILITARY, COURT. THEY ALSO WERE COMMEMORATING THE 42ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF GEN. SANDINO AND PROTESTING THE THREAT OF A CONGRESSIONAL WITCH HUNT FOR COMMUNISTS ON UNIVERSITY FACULTIES.

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2. ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 21, TWO OF THE STUDENTS WERE

CAPTURED BY THE GUARDIA WHEN THEY VENTURED OUTSIDE THE CHURCH THEY WERE OCCUPYING. ONE OF THE STUDENTS WAS JUAN ROCHA, NEPHEW OF FERNANDO AGUERO ROCHA, FORMER CONSERVATIVE PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. THE STUDENTS WERE HELD FOR TWO DAYS, AT WHICH TIME THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY NEGOTIATED A DEAL WITH THE STUDENTS: THE RELEASE OF THE ARRESTED STUDENTS IN RETURN FOR THE EVACUATION OF THE CHURCHES. THE STUDENTS PEACEFULLY ABANDONED THE CHURCHES VOLUNTARILY ON FEBRUARY 23, WITH NO REPORTS OF VIOLENCE OR ARRESTS.

3. THE STUDENTS STAGED PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS THE NIGHTS OF FEB 24, AND FEB 25, AGAIN WITH NO VIOLENCE OR POLICE INTERFERENCE, DEMANDING THE RELEASE OF BORGE. THE GUARDIA COMMANDER IN LEON (ACCORDING TO A LOCAL SOURCE), WANTS THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY TO ISSUE A STATEMENT DENYING THAT BORGE IS BEING HELD. HE WAS GOING TO WRITE THE STATEMENT HIMSELF AND HAVE IT SIGNED BY PROMINENT CIVIC LEADERS IN LEON, BUT FOUND MOST OF THE PEOPLE HE APPROACHED UNWILLING TO SIGN IT.

4. COMMENT: THE GUARDIA NACIONAL HAS NEVER ADMITTED PUBLICLY (NOR TO EMB) THAT IS HAS CAPTURED OR IS HOLDING BORGE, BUT STUDENTS AND MANY OTHERS THINK HE HAS BEEN CAUGHT.

5. THIS IS THE FIRST STUDENT DISTURBANCE IN SIX MONTHS AND IT TOOK A CONCATENATION OF MOTIVATIONS TO MOVE THEM FROM THE POLITICAL APATHY INTO WHICH THEY SEEM TO HAVE FALLEN.
THEBERGE

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